

A buyer's guide to the loan approval process.

Absolute reliability. Absolute results.

Guidelines and requirements for loan approvals have recently become more rigorous and each transaction is processed with much more scrutiny. Keeping just a few things in mind could save your sanity, stress level and funding schedule.

1. **Be expedient and thorough.** When initiating a loan, and throughout the loan process, it is imperative to provide complete documentation to your Mortgage Advisor as quickly as possible. For instance, if all pages of the bank statement are requested, it really means all pages. While you and I might not think it's necessary to include the reconciliation page of the statement, the lenders do. And, when they receive only five of the six pages of said bank statement, the loan process can become inefficient and stalled.
2. **Keep detailed financial records.** If it is necessary to transfer funds from one account to another or to sell stock for a down payment, keep a detailed paper trail of all transactions, deposits and liquidations. Lenders will request it.
3. **Be available.** Be sure to leave a contact phone number with your Mortgage Advisor if you are traveling for business or on vacation. Until all the loan approval conditions are met, you may be required to provide additional documentation or information.
4. **Keep your day job.** Lenders always contact your employer just before the loan funds. If you have left that company (quit, moved to a new company or retired), the lender will stop the loan from funding and recording.
5. **Stay married.** We're certainly not suggesting that you be deceptive, however, be aware that filing for divorce during the loan proc-

8 TIPS TO SAVE YOUR SANITY

ess can bring progress to a halt. Most lenders will not approve or fund a mortgage loan until the final decree (settlement terms) is recorded.

6. **Spill the details.** Be sure to notify your Mortgage Advisor of any changes to the purchase transaction. Unidentified last minute changes, such as escrow holdbacks, seller credits or termite work, can wreak havoc with closing dates.
7. **Safeguard your social security number.** Lenders are increasingly using credit scores to assist in mortgage credit decisions. Don't incur any new debt during the loan process. Doing so increases your debt-to-income ratio and reduces the amount you can borrow. If you decide to "just window shop" for a new car, don't give into the temptation to give a sales person your social security number; it will enable them to check your credit score. Each credit inquiry - whether you ultimately make a purchase or not- lowers your credit score. The same holds true for pre-approved credit card offers that you receive in the mail. Do not respond to them. Doing so will result in a credit check. For more specific information on your credit score, visit www.myfico.com.
8. **Stay current.** Continue to make the required payments on your present loans and/or credit cards. This may seem obvious but once in awhile, in the flurry of excitement and activity, a buyer forgets. This puts the loan and escrow close in jeopardy.

A home is a significant investment. And, admittedly, it can be a bit overwhelming when you stop to think about the inspections, reports, documentation and the many details and considerations associated with this exciting purchase. Following the recommendations above will help to streamline the loan process, minimize delays and alleviate some stress.